

December 29, 2002

Legal Notice

Notice of Application for Major Amendment to Operating Permit 00005 (pursuant to the Metal Mine Reclamation Act, Section 82-4-342).

Luzenac America, Inc. (Luzenac) filed an application on December 19, 2002 for an amendment to Operating Permit 00005 from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Environmental Management Bureau in Helena. The applicant seeks approval of a Mine Life Extension for the Yellowstone Mine for another 50 years of mining at a rate of 300,000 tons of talc per year. The Yellowstone Mine has been in operation since the 1950's. The mine is on private land 25 miles south of Ennis and 12 miles southwest of Cameron, MT in Madison County. It is located on the eastern flank of the Gravelly Range and is two miles from the Madison River in sections 3, 4, and 9 in Township 9 South, Range 1W and section 34 in Township 8 South, Range 1 West.

The operating permit was issued in 1971 for an open pit talc mine. Luzenac is a wholly owned subsidiary of Rio Tinto America, Inc.

The Mine Life Extension amendment would extend mine life but would not affect employment or production rates. The amendment would expand the permit boundary by 490 acres and the permitted disturbance at the mine by 250 acres.

The extension of mine life is proposed based on the ongoing demand for talc products and the identification of 17 million tons of mineable talc. The amendment would require expansion of the South 40 Open Pit, expansion of overburden disposal areas, and ultimately, relocation of the ore processing facilities. Luzenac has proposed revised closure and reclamation, monitoring and site-wide drainage plans for the mine.

The plan submitted provides information needed by the DEQ for the environmental analysis (EA) that will be conducted to comply with requirements of MMRA and the Montana Environmental Policy Act. The EA will evaluate the potential environmental impacts from the Mine Life Extension plan.

Copies of the application can be reviewed by the public at DEQ offices at 1520 E. 6th Ave., in Helena, MT. Please submit comments or questions on the proposal by February 10, 2003. For information on the project, to submit comments on the proposal, or to get on the mailing list for the EA, please contact:

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